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SPEECH *of*
Roger C. Sullivan

*Democratic Nominee
for United States Senator from Illinois
Made at the
Illinois Democratic State Convention
Held at Springfield, Illinois
Friday, Sept. 18th
1914*

Speech of Roger C. Sullivan, Democratic Nominee for United States Senator

The convention in which we are assembled marks the beginning of new times. A Democratic Congress opened the door for amendment of the constitution of the United States, and gave to the people the right to choose by direct vote their representatives in the United States senate. And so, for the first time in Illinois history, the candidate for United States senator comes today from the people to the convention, instead of going from the convention to the people.

I lack words to tell you how proud I am to be the first Democratic candidate for senator to carry the people's commission into a convention of his party. And because the nomination has come to me by a direct vote of the people, I cannot regard it as a personal triumph. I look upon it as the call of my party to public service; a call to lead in the contest before us; and in response to that call I give my pledge to carry on that contest with all the ability, all the courage and all the energy I possess.

By transfer
The White House

Who today would undo what has been done in these few months? Where is the man, where even the most partisan Republican or Progressive, who would dare to advocate the blotting out of one line of that record?

Keep in mind the fact that it is the record of but eighteen months. Then call to mind the record of the preceding sixteen years, during which the Republican party was in power. Compare the two. Give the Republicans the odds of sixteen years to a year and a half, then judge which shows the most in actual achievement for the betterment of our people and the advancement of humankind.

One Republican administration succeeded another at Washington. Conservative Republicans, Progressive Republicans, Stand-Pat Republicans and Reactionary Republicans talked and promised and went home. There were promises of tariff revision, of revenue reform, of trust regulation. One Republican President promised revision of the tariff downward, and did nothing. His successor came promising revision downward and gave us revision upward. A people starving for constructive legislation was gorged with promises.

Words are but poor things when the heart is full, and it is not with words that I intend to repay the faith in me which the Democrats of Illinois have expressed by their votes. I have been a worker all my life. I began working when a boy: I kept it up when I could have ceased work. I have loved labor, and I still love it: for it is only by honest labor in the public service that I can discharge the obligation the Democratic party of Illinois has laid upon me. When I go to Washington as United States senator from Illinois—and I *will* go—it will not be to shine as an orator, not to gratify social aspirations, not to serve personal ambitions, but to work, without reservation, for those policies and for that program which I have advocated throughout the campaign for my nomination.

Friends and opponents alike have said that I have constructive ability. I am thankful for it, for these are constructive days.

The campaign for the November election is to be, upon our part, a campaign for right and justice and good government: a campaign to preserve the constructive work already achieved by a Democratic national administration, and to buttress that work by completing the constructive program now in hand. We enter this campaign as the advocates of peace, prosperity and progress everywhere. To mark the sincerity of our purpose, we offer the record of our party since it came into power a little more than eighteen months ago.

It was a time of hypocrisy and cant; a time of standing pat and pulling back; a time when each grabbed what he could get and reached for more, careless of whose rights he invaded; a time when the strong were encouraged to band together to keep what they had and take what they could. So intent were they on getting that they sometimes robbed each other and picked the pockets of their own kind, as in the case of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad. It was an era of economic reversion to the law of tooth and claw.

Cant and hypocrisy, I say, were everywhere. Republicans in high places talked much and loudly of robber barons and malefactors of great wealth, then winked at railroad rebates to the barons and looked the other way when the malefactors were at work. They told us the trusts were the great enemies of the people, and were fostered by an exorbitant tariff, and they gave us relief by revising the tariff—upward. They said our currency law was antiquated, inadequate and unjust, permitting control of our finances by a favored few—and they gave us the panic of 1907 to prove it—but they left the law untouched of pen or pencil. They pointed out the wickedness of interlocking directorates, of stock-watering and of unlawful combinations; but they helped along the Tennessee Coal and Iron deal, and permitted the Mellen regime to go as far as it liked in wrecking the railroads of New England. They held up to us the justice of an income tax to equalize the cost of government by shifting a part of the burden of those who were carrying the tariff load to those who profited by the tariff; but they didn't give us the law.

They gave us half a generation of promises made to get votes, and broken to get campaign contributions. They preached one thing and practiced another until the nation became saturated with hypocrisy, even as the government at Washington. Those vices trickled downward from the national government into our business life, and into our social life.

At last the people sickened of a diet of cant until even those who had glorified the history and proclaimed the beneficence of the Republican party turned insurgent upon the culminating hypocrisy of the tariff revision upward. Then came the Baltimore convention, and Illinois made it possible to elect to the presidency the greatest constructive statesman of the age—Woodrow Wilson.

With that event dawned a new day for this country. Honesty and fair dealing with the people took the place of chicanery and deceit. The people learned that political promises could be kept: that a party pledge made before election became a party obligation after election.

The day of hypocrisy is passing. We are coming to a new understanding of the word "honesty." By it we do not now mean mere dollar honesty; we mean mental honesty as well. We are upon a time when the people will demand mental honesty of all their public officials; when men in big business and in little business will find they cannot succeed through misrepresentation, deceit or chicanery. We are at a point where organized society must understand that life must be a fair, free and open race, without special privileges for anyone, and without exemptions from the penalties of wrongdoing.

We are coming to a time when efficiency is to take the place of sham in governmental affairs and in business affairs. for when honesty controls only efficiency and good service avail.

Only eighteen months have passed since President Wilson came into office, but they have been months of accomplishment, of efficiency, of real progress.

Tariff reform came first. A tariff law which even its friends damned with faint praise, was replaced by one which was fair, equitable and responsive to public demand.

The income tax went on the statute books with the tariff law. It removed a burden of taxation from those least able to bear it, and placed it where it belonged, on those who hardly felt the addition.

Then came currency reform. It had been promised for fifty years. It had been a convenient football for gentlemen who wanted to talk, but who did not care to act. A currency law has been passed, and it is so good a law that even now, before it is in full effect, it is our safeguard in a time of financial peril.

But the constructive work of the Democratic national administration is only fairly begun. Our party is pledged further, and the pledges will be fulfilled.

Laws to stop the criminal practices of "big business" are on the eve of attainment. If they are not passed before I get to Washington, they will have my vote. They are not laws to interfere with honest business, not laws to hamper it nor disturb it; but laws to drive out rascality, and to put the business of the country upon a sound and permanent basis.

Another piece of constructive legislation that will engage my earnest personal efforts is that for an American merchant marine. The crops of our Prairie State should be carried to the markets of the world in ships that fly the American flag; our manufactured products should go with the crops. We cannot overestimate the stimulus that restoration of the United States to its proper place among the maritime nations will give to industry in Illinois. The question of a merchant marine is not a local seaboard question. Europe, with its shipping blockaded, no longer can furnish the vessels needed to carry our freights. The opportunity to do this for ourselves awaits us.



There is still another piece of constructive work, nearer home, that I will undertake to further. Iowa, Indiana, Michigan and other states in our immediate territory, are benefited by good roads in Illinois, as Illinois is benefited by good roads in those states. The federal government spends millions of dollars yearly on river and harbor improvement, much of it of doubtful value. A tithe of the amount so spent, if laid out upon our highways, would materially reduce the cost of marketing our products, to the advantage of the worker, the manufacturer and particularly the farmer.

Let us now turn again to the record of Democratic achievement. On its work in enacting constructive legislation alone the Democratic national administration has earned a unanimous vote of approval from the American people. But there is a record of still more solemn significance. The page of history that will show the greatest service to our country and to humanity performed in our time is being written now.

Let your minds dwell for a moment upon Mexico and all that is suggested by that name. Only a few weeks ago, you will remember, there were men in this country who were willing to plunge this nation into war, if they could obtain personal or political advantage thereby. You remember the abuse and scorn heaped upon the President because he remained firm in a crisis: because he demanded that both sides of a question be considered: because he dared to do right in the face of threats that to do right was to lose popularity.



Then Europe burst into a flame of war. A continent is bathed in blood. A generation is being destroyed. The world trembles, amazed and appalled. Every great nation of the Caucasian race, save ours, is involved—every one, save us, is on the battlefield, or sits armed awaiting the dread day of conflict.

But America is at peace. We have no call for volunteers. We have no conscription. We have no lists of dead and injured.

America stands aghast at conditions it believed civilization had made impossible. And yet the Mexican situation held the same germ of international strife that the Servian situation held.



We are not at peace by accident. We are at peace because Woodrow Wilson had the vision, the justice and the courage to stand firm for peace and the methods of peace against clamor for war. Had hot blood, rash pride and arrogance of power been given their way, we would have been at war with Mexico, and God alone knows where else, before the war spirit swept Europe. But steadfast in the knowledge that he was right, the President took the unfair criticism that assailed him and turned the jibes of the boasters and the self-serving into the gratitude of the millions. He is in Washington, "sticking to his job," holding our country to the course of peace, meeting with sound sense and honest purposes all the problems of the great war, and ready, on the first occasion that offers, to mediate between the warring powers and bring peace to Europe. He has earned our gratitude by keeping our peace secure. He will earn the gratitude of the world by restoring the peace of the world. Hope today for the millions of our brothers in Europe lies in that strong, lonely man in the White House.

Let us thank God, my friends, that at the crisis of the century Woodrow Wilson was at the head of this nation. Let us be grateful, too, that he had a Democratic Congress to uphold him, to support his policies and to stand with him in his determination to maintain peace.

Our President has shown us that he can stand criticism unmoved. We must show him that we appreciate his courage by giving him a Congress with a friendly majority so strong that no demagogue will dare to oppose his pacific policy. We must show the nations of Europe that the people of the United States are at one with their great leader. The welfare of the whole world, as well as the welfare of our own country, is concerned in the campaign we open today.

The hands of the President must be upheld. That can be done only by the election of men to the national Congress who are in thorough accord with his policies. The Democratic majority in the senate is small. That majority must be increased. In this task Illinois has its share. It has one Democratic senator in Washington, but his vote is offset by that of a colleague who, on all important questions, is arrayed against the President and aligned with his bitterest critics.



Illinois must not be content to be merely a negative force in this situation, but should be and must be a positive force with two representatives in the upper chamber of the national Congress upon whom the President can rely.

Shall the head of this government be sustained in the hour of world-wide conflict? That, my friends, is the question this nation is now called upon to answer. That is the question to which you and I and all patriotic citizens are in duty bound to bring a triumphantly affirmative answer at the conclusion of the contest upon which we enter today. The eyes of the world are upon us. Beside that vital issue, the question of whether Roger Sullivan or another shall be the next United States senator from Illinois is of no importance.

By mandate of the people, delivered in a free and open and state-wide primary election, I am the nominee of the Democratic party for United States senator. The question of sustaining the President of the United States at this time can be affirmatively answered only by my election and by the election of the Democratic candidates for the national house of representatives in every congressional district of the state.



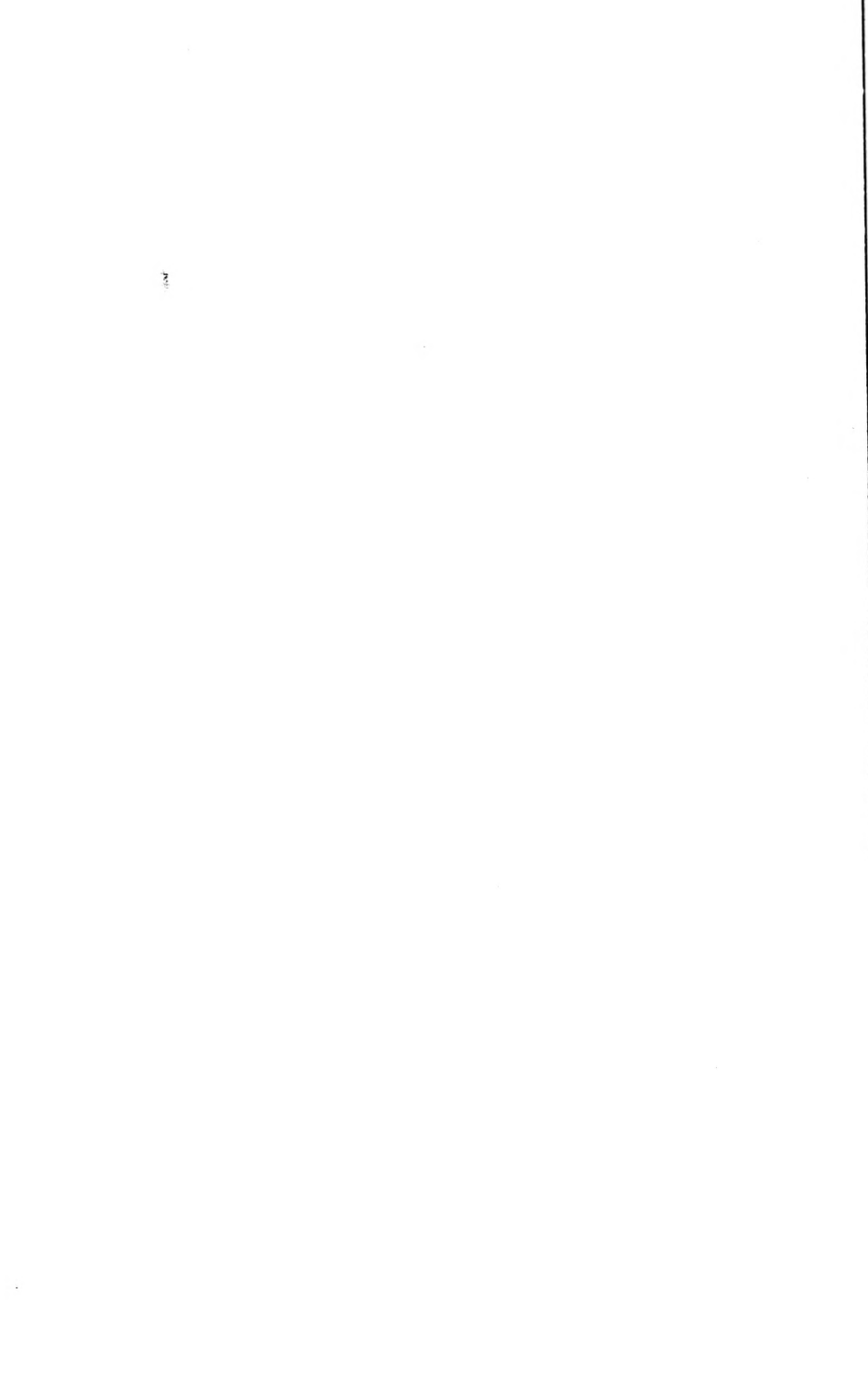
When I entered upon the contest for the nomination which has come to me, it was with a desire to find a broad opportunity to support personally and officially the policies of President Wilson, and to aid him to the fullest extent of my power in his great constructive work. As the campaign has progressed and momentous situations have been unfolded, my admiration for him has grown stronger. I am pledged to support him. My pledge has never been lightly made. No man has ever said that Roger Sullivan broke his word.

In my campaign for the nomination I made no appeal to prejudice, to class or to locality. No bitterness, no strife, no legitimate excuse for reluctance to abide by and heartily support the result of the primary election can be found in any act of mine, during the campaign which has just closed or during the entire period of my life.

The primary has been held. The verdict has been given. The good Democrats who differed with me in the primary campaign have accepted that verdict, manfully and in good spirit. Our party stands harmonious and united as it has never been united before. The solid phalanx of the Illinois Democracy is ready to meet its foes.



I believe that I can render to the President effective aid. The Democrats of Illinois have declared that they believe I can. Upon this question of sustaining President Wilson and the Democratic national administration I am going to the people, along with my fellow-Democrats who have been nominated for Congress. I know there can be but one answer. It will be given—it *must* be given— by a majority that will mark the high-tide of patriotic citizenship in Illinois.







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